



Health Matters

A newsletter from the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit

Volume 2 Issue 1

<http://www.healthunit.org>

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If you have any suggestions for Health Matters please email us at info@healthunit.org

TV turn off week - Let's get unplugged

Submitted by Meagan Finucane, Public Health Nurse

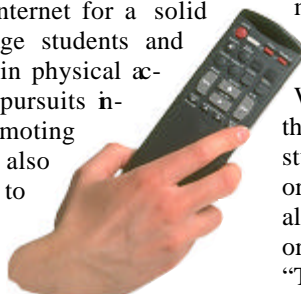
Would your students enjoy a fun week of school and family activities? The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit is issuing an exciting challenge to increase the level of physical activity and to promote healthy eating among students and their families.

This year, "TV Turn Off Week" will take place from April 8th to April 14th, 2002. It requires individual classes or entire schools, and hopefully family members, to abstain from watching television, playing video games and surfing the Internet for a solid week. We will encourage students and their families to engage in physical activities and educational pursuits instead. In addition to promoting physical activity, we are also encouraging families to make healthier food choices.

The latest Nielson rating indicates that children watch an average of nearly three hours of television per day.... This does not include time playing video games. By the time a child finishes high school, a total of three solid years of television viewing time has been accumulated. In addition, some students spend as much as 30 sedentary hours per week in school. Recent studies also indicate that high sugar breakfast cereals, snacks, and fast foods are among the most heavily advertised products on television programs aimed at children. These foods are less nutritious than other foods such as fruits and vegetables, which receive less TV advertising time. Research shows the more time children spend watching TV, the more likely they are to eat unhealthy foods and be physically inactive.

According to the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Institute, only 43% of 5 -12 year olds and 33% of 13-17 year olds were considered active enough for optimal health.

Inactivity increases the risk for a number of chronic diseases including heart disease, stroke, colon and breast cancer, Type II diabetes and osteoporosis. Learning the importance of physical activity and healthy eating at a young age is essential to the development of a life-long healthy lifestyle, as well as the prevention of long-term disease.



We need your help to promote and support this important initiative. By encouraging your students to participate in this program, and by organizing fun activities that present healthy alternatives to watching television, your class or school will have the opportunity to win the "TV Turn Off Week" grand prize! Help is available! One month prior to the event, the Health Unit will provide participating teachers with a resource package complete with registration cards, posters, certificates and fun ideas to promote physical activity and healthy eating.

A one-week recess from television will allow people more time to exercise, play, talk, read, volunteer, create, participate in their community and think about healthy eating. It is all about having fun!

What do you do if you don't watch TV? The REAL answer is EVERYTHING! If you would like to register your class or school for "TV Turn Off Week", or if you have any questions about the program, please contact Meagan Finucane, Public Health Nurse from the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit at (613) 283-2740



BACK TO SCHOOL NUTRITION

Submitted by Dianne Oickle, Public Health Nutritionist

It's January. The kids are excited to get back to school, and you are thinking, "OK, what am I going to pack in their lunches this year?" Whether you are talking about preschool or high school, the question of what to send to school for kids always comes up. Fear not! Helping busy kids eat healthy foods at school is easier than you think.



Lunchtime munchies?

Have you ever thought about what is *really* going in your kid's lunch? In recent years, we have come to rely more on convenience foods and pre-packaged meals than ever before. But these packaged foods are often high in salt, sugar, calories, and low in vitamins and minerals. Consider this.....

- children typically eat 5-10 times more sodium than they need
- packaged oriental noodles with dry soup mix - are deep fried in palm oil, which contains saturated fat, high amounts of sodium, almost no fibre, vitamins or minerals
- bologna, pepperoni, and other fatty luncheon meats are also loaded with salt, fat, and have little protein, vitamins or minerals
- some juice boxes that are fruit "drinks", "punch", and "cocktail" may have no more than 10% real fruit juice and are loaded with sugar. Think of them as soft drinks disguised as juice.
- pre-packaged "make-your-own sandwich" packs get 2/3 of their calories from fat and sugar

Short on time?

Pulling lunch together in a hurry is often the biggest challenge. Try doing a weekly lunch menu. On Sunday night, plan school lunches for the next week with your child. Children tend to eat healthier if they have had a say in what is offered to them. This way, you avoid making last-minute, unhealthy food choices that are low in nutrients. Try packing lunch the night before to avoid the mad rush in the morning.



So what can you pack in a kid's school lunch?

- try building your own "make-your-own sandwich" pack - buy a re-usable foodsaver with compartments and pack it with vegetables, meat (i.e., sliced turkey, roast beef, or ham), cheese, and include some whole grain bread. Kids love the compartments and the idea of building their own lunch

- include at least one serving of fruit in each lunch
- sneak vegetables into sandwiches, such as spinach, green pepper, and tomato
- pack pretzels, dry cereal (i.e. Cheerios, Shreddies, and Corn Flakes), or breadsticks into lunch instead of chips
- bagels, english muffins, and multigrain bread are great choices for sandwiches; or try soft tortilla shells to "wrap" a sandwich
- pasta salad and potato salad with added vegetables and cheese
- raw vegetable sticks with some salad dressing or fruit pieces with some yogurt for dip
- tuna salad, egg, salad, or chicken salad sandwich - or dip crackers in the filling instead
- fill a thermos with casseroles, soups, pasta or other hot dishes
- try putting previously rejected foods in interesting containers - colorful foodsavers or very small baggies - it may make it seem like a different food altogether
- don't forget an ice pack to keep cold foods cold, or a thermos to keep hot foods hot. Short on ice packs? Try an "edible ice pack" - freeze an orange and use it as the ice pack - by the time lunch rolls around, the orange will be thawed out and lunch will still be cold



What if my child will not eat what I pack for lunch?

Sometimes children will not eat an entire lunch packaged for them. Especially with younger children, a large lunch may seem like too much for them to handle. If you present lunch as a variety of snack foods (healthy ones of course!), then children may be more interested in eating smaller amounts of various foods. Experiment with foods smaller in size and smaller in quantity

For more information on back to school nutrition, please contact the Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark District Health Unit's Health Action Line at 1-800-660-5853 (345-5685) and ask to speak to a registered dietitian.

Some information from Center for Science in the Public Interest (www.cspinet.org), Parentsplace.com (www.parentsplace.com), and KidsHealth (www.kidshealth.org).



Healthy Choices

“Thoughts and feelings happen.
Acting on them is a choice.”

Healthy Choices is a four-week program for grades 7 & 8 students. It has Public Health Nurses going into the classroom for one afternoon a week for four weeks to discuss health related issues such as:

- 4 Self-Esteem
- 4 Body Image
- 4 Peer Pressure
- 4 Relationships
- 4 Drugs
- 4 Stress
- 4 Smart risk
- 4 Choices

This program uses interactive and innovative ways to educate students through a wide variety of activities, games, videos, written assignments, and discussions. Each goal and objective of Healthy Choices matches the objectives set out by the Healthy Living Strand of the Ontario Curriculum: Health and Physical Activity Education 1998. Every school in the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark area will be offered this program every second year. To learn more about this program please call 1-800-660-5853 and ask to speak to someone in the Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Services.



Food safety in our schools

School Breakfast and Before and After programs are designed to give children a nutritional snack and therefore a good start to their daily activities.

Although nutrition is the main focus of the programs Food Safety must not be overlooked. Hand washing should be encouraged to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.

If dishes and cutlery are needed, single service articles should be used. Multi-service dishes can be used if the schools have sinks and a three-compartment sink method for washing is implemented.

1. Wash dishes with soap
2. Rinse dishes in clean water
3. Sanitize with an acceptable sanitizer



Most programs use non-hazardous foods to provide three nutritional snacks, if however, hazardous foods such as meat products or dairy products are used, a refrigerator unit with an accurate thermometer should be provided. The safe storage temperature for such foods is 5° C or lower.

Adhering to these simple rules of food safety should help volunteers of these programs as they provide safe and healthy foods to children in our communities.



Lungs are for Life

Soon all schools in Leeds Grenville and Lanark will receive the new Curriculum based tobacco prevention program **Lungs are for Life**.

With National Non-Smoking week January 20 to 26 2002, it is the perfect opportunity to pick up easy to use exercises and lessons from this newly revised resource. A teachers package as well as specific lessons for grades 4,5,6,7,and 8 are provided to you in the binder that will be sent to all schools very shortly. Look for the Lung Associations tobacco prevention program **Lungs are for Life** in your School.





**Teachers are
people too**

Breast Self-Examination (BSE): Is it really necessary?

Submitted by Susan LaBrie, Public Health Nurse

We know that breast cancer is the most common type of cancer in women. One in 10 women are expected to develop breast cancer in their lifetime and 1 in 26 are expected to die from it. What we don't know is what causes breast cancer – or how to prevent it.

We know that when breast cancer is found early, the chances for successful treatment and recovery are much greater. We also know that women who practice regular breast screening and breast self-examination (BSE) are more likely to notice breast changes early.

BSE is a simple method that women can use to check their breasts. It involves using the pads of your fingertips and moving them in small circles over every inch of your breasts, including the nipples and armpits. It is also important to look closely at your breasts in a mirror to check for changes in their size or shape. Practicing BSE once a month helps you to become familiar with your breasts, making it easier to notice any changes. BSE should be done about 7 days after the first day of your period, or on the same day each month for women who don't have a regular period.

All women can do BSE – at any age. It's not hard, but it is important to know how to do it the right way. The Canadian Cancer Society has a free pamphlet with step-by-step pictures and instructions. Call 1-800-939-3333 for your own copy.

It is important to see your health care provider right away if you notice anything unusual, because early diagnosis and treatment is your best protection. Keep in mind that most breast lumps are not cancer, but the only way to know for sure is go and be checked.

Women should also have their breasts checked by a trained health care professional once a year. If you are a woman 50 or older, a regular mammogram is recommended by the Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP). Call 1-800-668-9304 for more information or to make an appointment with an OBSP site nearest you.

Remember ... finding breast cancer early could save your life; but it's up to you to make the choice to protect your health, and your breasts.

If you have further questions or concerns, or would like a nurse to talk to your group, contact the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit at 345-5685 or 1-800-660-5853.



WinsAgain !!

North Grenville (Kemptonville) Wins Again!!

*Submitted by Brent Dalglish,
Director of Health Promotion*

The Ministry of Transportation has selected North Grenville (Kemptonville) as this year's successful recipient for the 2001 Road Safety Challenge –Ontario Community Award in the Child Safety Category.



This year's winning entry consisted of a bike helmet show-**Keep Your Head, Stay Smart, Wear A Helmet**, produced and directed by Arla Casselman-Veinotte, Public Health Nurse of the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit-Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Department and a member of the North Grenville Road Safety Committee.

The pilot schools that participated were Kemptonville and Oxford On Rideau Schools. Two groups of seven, very talented students acting as peer educators delivered many poignant facts and messages on bike helmet safety. The ultimate goal of the show was to raise student awareness of bike helmets and their importance in preventing injuries and saving lives.

Congratulations to North Grenville Road Safety Committee and the peer educators of Kemptonville Public- Eric MacAfee, Alyssa Smith, Nikki Norris-Michaud, Matt Seely, Jim Cavill, Sarah Wilson, Patrick Gorrell, Andrew Gilmer, teacher- Judy Kennedy and Oxford On Rideau Public- Myranda Collins, Alison Collings, Amanda McNaughtan, Jacob Meeks, Chelsea Wagner, David Sampson, Kyle Carson, Mat Geneau, Jon Mondello and teacher- Marilyn Crawford.



Oral Health and Learning

Submitted by Lainie Taylor, Dental Hygienist

When Children's Oral Health Suffers, So Does Their Ability to Learn

"What amounts to a silent epidemic of dental and oral diseases is affecting some population groups. This burden of disease restricts activities in schools, work, and home, and often significantly diminishes the quality of life."

U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher, PH.D., M.D.



Lost School Time and Restricted-Activity Days

An estimated 51 million school hours per year in the U.S. are lost because of dental-related illness.

Students ages 5 to 17 years missed 1,611,000 school days in 1996 due to acute dental problems – an average of 3.1 days per 100 students.

Children from families with low incomes had nearly 12 times as many restricted-activity days (e.g. days of missed school) because of dental problems as did children from families with higher incomes.

Oral Health and Learning

Early tooth loss caused by dental decay can result in failure to thrive, impaired speech development, absence from and inability to concentrate in school, and reduced self-esteem.

Students with preventable or untreated health and development problems may have trouble concentrating and learning, have frequent absences from school, or develop permanent disabilities that affect their ability to learn and grow.

Children who take a test while they have a toothache are unlikely to score as well as children who are undistracted by pain.

Poor oral health has been related to decreased school performance, poor social relationships, and less success later in life. Children experiencing pain are distracted and unable to concentrate on schoolwork.

Children are often unable to verbalize their dental pain. Teachers may notice a child who is having difficulty attending to tasks or who is demonstrating the effects of pain – anxiety, fatigue, irritability, depression, and withdrawal from normal activities. However, teachers cannot understand these behaviors if they are not aware that a child has a dental problem.

Children with chronic dental pain are unable to focus, are easily distracted, and may have problems with schoolwork completion. They may also experience deterioration of school performance, which negatively impacts their self-esteem.

Left untreated, the pain and infection caused by tooth decay can lead to problems in eating, speaking, and learning.

If a child is suffering pain from a dental problem it may affect the child's school attendance, and mental and social well-being while at school.

Public Health Dental Personnel report a range of oral health problems such as dental caries, gingival disease, malocclusion (poor bite), loose teeth, and oral trauma in children.

When children's acute dental problems are treated and they are not experiencing pain, their learning and school-attendance records improve.

Nutrition and Learning

People who are missing teeth have to limit their food choices because of chewing problems, which may result in nutritionally inadequate diets.

The daily nourishment that children receive affects their readiness for school.

Inadequate nutrition during childhood can have detrimental effects on children's cognitive development and on productivity in adulthood. Nutritional deficiencies also negatively affect children's school performance, their ability to concentrate and perform complex tasks, and their behavior.

Programs for Improving Oral Health

Oral health care is a critical component of health care and must be included in the design of community programs.

School-based oral health services can help make preventive services such as fluoride and dental sealants accessible to children from families with low incomes. Services should include screening, referral, and case management to ensure the timely receipt of dental care from community practitioners.

Reference: Oral Health and Learning by National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health and Georgetown University, Arlington, VA 22201-2617.

For more information on dental services provided by the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit, please call 613-345-5685 or 1-800-660-5853.



HealthNET ... Resource sites for you on-line

What should parents know to keep kids safe(r) in Cyberspace?

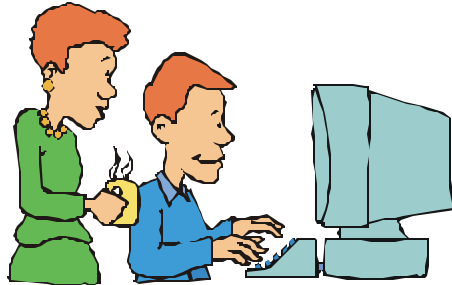
Submitted by Denise Gaulin, Public Health Nurse

CYBERSAFETY

The Internet is a world of information, open to anyone with a computer and a connection! But just as we prepare our children for the world with all its splendors and dangers, we must take the same measures with the Internet.
Source: (Cybersafety for Kids Online, a parent's Guide)



Computers in main living areas are easier to monitor for content and time use



Internet blocking programs

- Allow parents to place restrictions on the words and images delivered to their computers.
- Blocking and filtering programs are not perfect. Text is susceptible to interpretation and words have multiple meanings.
- Blockers may prevent children from finding beneficial/ educational materials because of particular wording.

Many filters and blockers are available for a free 30 day trial.

The Health Unit does not endorse any particular provider. Each program has unique merits and shortcomings. Individuals are encouraged to evaluate several products and decide which is best for their family.

A Child's Best Protection is a parent who is aware of the dangers

"SEX" is the most frequently searched word on the Internet. Kids and Adults are curious about sex in all its glory and perversion. Parents must accept responsibility for educating and supervising their children's involvement with cybersex, or their family values will be violated and children may fall victim to abuse.

People sometimes unintentionally get into "sex sites". People searching "dog breeds", "anarchy", and "beavers" have reported getting "hits" they never expected! Open discussion rather than shocked reaction is the best approach to take when one of these mistakes occurs.



HealthNET ... Resource sites for you on-line

Cybersex and "Chats" CHAT COMMUNITIES

- Are made up of people who go to a specific Web Address to "chat" (real time typed conversation)
- "Chat Groups" are usually focused to converse about a specific subject such as sports, health, kids, books, college, divorce, dating.
- Each Chat community has its own computer software. Most can be downloaded without cost, while you sit and wait.
- People who are not computer users may be unaware that their children or spouse are involved in "chatting".
- Some popular computer games allow people to meet and play with others across the Web.



Chat communities can help reduce isolation and promote open exchange and ideas

Examples of some large chat communities:

<http://www.chat.yahoo.com/?myHome>

<http://www.talkcity.com>

<http://www.icq.com>

Sexual health sites

- Older teens and adults may want to seek out sexual education materials for their personal or academic use.
- Because "SEX" is so common on the Web, it can be difficult to separate quality educational information from pornography or personal opinion.

The following sites are offered for parental review. Some may provide information which you disagree with, but all sites are produced by Professional Sex Educators or Counsellors.

<http://www.sexuality.org/ftpsite.html> - Washington, USA

<http://www.sieccan.org> - Toronto, Canada

<http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu/index.htm> - Columbia, USA

<http://www.login.net/acsa-caah> - Montreal, Canada

"STD" outbreak traced to internet chat room"

San Francisco (Reuters) 1999

- People are vulnerable when they decide to meet "Cyberfriends" in the real world.
- People sometimes take on "Cyberpersonas" which are different from their real life personalities.
- People should take all the "real world" precautions available when meeting a "cyberfriend". These people are strangers although they may seem very familiar.
- Assaults, frauds and S.T.D. Outbreaks have grown out of Cyber "relationships". Caution is advised.

Parents can help older children select suitable chat communities. Some chat sites are monitored and electronically delete "chatters" who get off topic or don't adhere to the established rules for language and behaviour.

Some "chats" allow a person to create a code list of people they know, who are allowed to enter to their chat space.

